12 Evaluating Human Resources

> ## Learning objectives
>
> ☐ Understand the special challenges facing HR management and evaluation in the events sector.
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> ☐ Be able to develop goals and KPIs for evaluation at each stage.
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> ☐ Understand motivation theory for staff and volunteers.
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> ☐ Be able to measure motivation, satisfaction and commitment.
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> ☐ Learn the relevance of management by objectives (MBO).
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> ☐ Be able to develop and administer appropriate performance evaluations including rating scales.
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> ☐ Understand the importance of documenting and evaluating critical incidents.

12.1 Introduction

Events often face difficult challenges in human-resource management, as discussed in books by Van der Wagen (2007), Baum (2006) Baum et al. (2009) and in Handbook chapters by Hanlon and Jago (2012) and Schlenker et al. (2012). Each challenge has implications for evaluation, and here are some of the big ones.

♦ Experiences are at the core, and workers (visible and off-stage) are part of the experience co-creation process; how can we evaluate that contribution?

♦ Risks are plentiful, and the unexpected might occur, placing workers in a difficult position; working conditions vary greatly, both indoors and outdoors, sometimes in crowded spaces, and workers might be isolated.

♦ Volunteers are usually essential, and often are the dominant service delivery group. How are they to be evaluated relative to paid employees? Do they have their own motives and ways of evaluating their satisfaction?

♦ Professionalism in event management is not a universal constant (Where is education/training? Who certifies professionals? What code of ethics applies?)

♦ Incentives, rewards and pay are often not in line with government and the private sector, making recruitment, motivation and retention more difficult;

can self-evaluation and teamwork contribute to higher levels of satisfaction and performance?

◆ Pulsating events might have only a few permanent staff, with periodic recruitment and training bursts as the event nears; how do we measure training effectiveness in that context?

Specific HR risks or problems to look for, as discussed by Van der Wagen (2007:31), include the following.

◆ Mismanagement: owing to poor recruitment or training? there is a constant need for a crisis management team and contingency plans to cope with failures and mistakes.

◆ Staff shortages (due to a failure to recruit as planned, or to dissatisfaction of staff and volunteers?); events must have a back-up recruitment plan.

◆ Loss of key personnel, leaving a gap to be filled by recruitment or sharing duties within teams.

◆ Attrition during the event: is there a need for better working conditions or rewards? Re-deployment might work, but only if cross-training has occurred.

◆ Misconduct, resulting in conflicts or negative media coverage; suggests a need for counselling and for discipline or dismissal options.

◆ Critical incidents occur to which workers must respond, and workers might be the victims. Is training for incidents adequate? Crisis response teams have to be in place.

12.2 HR planning and management evaluation tasks

Lynn Van der Wagen in the book *Human Resource Management for Events* (2007), covered the main steps in the process, starting with workforce planning. At each stage, from start to wind-up, evaluators have a key role to play. The figure provides suggested goals that actually define the process, and KPIs for evaluators.

Figure 12.1: Human resources planning and management, goals and KPIs

Suggested goals for HP planning & management	Sample KPIs
Planning ■ Establish HR policies and procedures; integrate with overall planning and project management ■ Conduct and periodically revise job analysis and job descriptions ■ Determine the roles of paid staff, volunteers and teams ■ Develop a recruitment, induction, training and motivation plan ■ Establish, testing and refine performance evaluation methods and measures	■ All positions filled with competent personnel ■ Managers' reports on sufficiency of staff and volunteer workers (numbers and competence) ■ Regular performance measures Efficiency measures: ■ Reduced cost of recruitment and training ■ High levels of commitment and retention

Organisational design	■ Worker evaluation of management systems and managers
■ Building the organisation so that staff and volunteers are placed appropriately, supervised, and evaluated	■ Visitor and stakeholder evaluation of the event's staff, volunteers and service quality
■ Blending and/or separating paid staff and volunteers in terms of motivation, tasks, evaluation criteria	
■ Internal evaluation plus getting feedback from relevant external stakeholders	
Recruitment and training	■ All positions filled according to schedule
■ Recruitment and training to be completed on schedule	■ Reduce or eliminate worker problems, complaints, disciplinary actions
■ Disciplinary action or termination, if warranted	■ Zero or reduced accidents and injuries
■ Evaluating effectiveness of recruitment and training (with real-time adjustments as necessary)	■ Immediate attention to work environment issues
■ Risk, health and safety	
■ Standards and regulations to be implemented and checked	
■ Assignment of responsibilities for risk assessment, critical incident response and reporting, and evaluation/ correction procedures	
Wrap-up	■ Post-event evaluation of the workforce by management and stakeholders
■ Stakeholder consultations/feedback	■ Post-event evaluation by staff and volunteers
■ Summative evaluation, especially considering retention	■ Improvement of effectiveness and efficiency measures over time
■ Report on HR evaluation; recommendations for continuous improvement	

12.3 Motivation, satisfaction & commitment

Barron and Rihova (2011:207) reviewed the literature and theory on volunteer motivation, as applied to planned events, concluding that: "The diversity of the research findings suggests that there is not one generic response to the issue of volunteer motivation. It differs depending on the nature of the volunteering activity, the context in which it is measured, and the demographics of the target group." There is little doubt that the type of event influences who volunteers and why, as social and professional affiliations and leisure interests lead many into volunteering.

Motivational theory (discussed in Van der Wagen, 2007) is a useful starting point for evaluation, mainly because if you understand what motivates people you are more likely to employ the most relevant criteria and methods, and then achieve higher levels of performance, satisfaction and commitment. For example, volunteers seeking a learning opportunity to prepare for a career (this is common for students) or to network as part of a job search, might be more amenable to positive feedback on how to improve their general work skills than those who